

# Winning with Walmart...

by Leslie Zanoff  
photos by Alexa Lambert

To win with Wal-Mart, manufacturers must be connected to its many parts. In addition to being responsive to Walmart's immediate needs and requests, manufacturers must be able to connect with Walmart's many departments, including merchandising, marketing, and operations. That usually means having on-the-ground resources in Walmart's Bentonville headquarters and across the country to meet the demands of Walmart's huge store base and dynamic business.

CROSSMARK® is an important and influential provider of headquarter and in-store marketing and merchandising solutions to manufacturers serving Walmart. It has broad reach: it connects the manufacturer community to all of Walmart's departments and banners and represents Walmart and Sam's Club as a marketing and sales services agency. As Walmart changes, CROSSMARK adapts with it. The result? CROSSMARK is better able to serve Walmart and the manufacturers who sell products in Walmart's stores. Over time, the result has been explosive growth for all three parties: Walmart, its supplier base, and CROSSMARK.

## Connectivity

Manufacturers rely on CROSSMARK to provide insights and knowledge regarding Walmart's business and how to stay connected to it. This requires CROSSMARK to maintain a deep understanding about all things related to Walmart. Consequently, CROSSMARK is a founding board member for The Center for Retailing Excellence, a steering committee member of Doing Business in Bentonville, and a strategic partner of 8th & Walton. CROSSMARK's executive leaders hold board seats in virtually all major trade organizations, including the GMA, GMDC, NACDS, CHPA, and NARMS.



The experience and insight CROSSMARK gains from working with such organizations and with so many of Walmart's suppliers helps enable it to work with its clients to create innovative, highly effective approaches that help stimulate brand growth at Walmart.

CROSSMARK's successes on behalf of their clients have been recognized by Walmart. Consequently, CROSSMARK has been appointed by Walmart to manage and implement such major initiatives as:

- Shopper Events:
    - Co-Designed and managed brand building experience that occur in-store
  - Frozen Food Resets:
    - All supercenters reset. 250,000 hours of work completed in 3 weeks.
  - Weekend Toy Pack-Out Program:
    - Top 1,000 Toyland stores, Friday/Saturday/Sunday coverage during the holidays.
  - Canopy Furniture Program:
    - All stores, modular reset, P-O-P installation
- "Connectivity in Walmart's headquarters is absolutely critical to our success," claims Glen Walter, Vice President of



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- Kris Widener

Ken Drish, Vice President of Business Development for CROSSMARK's Walmart team and Kris Widener, Walmart Division Manager.



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New CROSSMARK office, located in the Shoppes at Pinnacle Hills.



CROSSMARK's Walmart Team. “Our team works hard every day to stay at the forefront of information regarding Walmart so we can continue to provide best-practice guidance to our clients”

**Responsiveness**

Working with Walmart requires responsiveness too. CROSSMARK is constantly ready to assist clients with any Walmart related need. Whether an issue is fundamentally strategic – for example, helping a client prepare for an annual line review - or fundamentally tactical – for example, requiring the ability to react quickly to a request to execute in any Walmart or Sam's club - CROSSMARK is fully prepared to handle it.

Responsiveness isn't enough. Responsibility is equally important. CROSSMARK believes that part of its responsibility is to help clients allocate resources effectively. Each of its clients faces unique challenges. Accordingly, CROSSMARK firmly believes that “a one-size-fits all” approach is not an option. CROSSMARK growth solutions consider all aspects of a given client's business and use CROSSMARK's deep and specific knowledge of Walmart and its various banners as growth and innovation drivers.

“In as much as clients who manage multiple brand portfolios do not go to market with a uniform, inflexible approach to each brand, we do not represent our clients with a uniform, inflexible approach”, says CROSSMARK's Kris Widener, Walmart Division Manager. “Our team works diligently to support and align with our client's expectations for their brands. We use analytics and insights to drive Walmart headquarter acceptance of brand building initiatives. We subsequently ensure that each and every one of these initiatives is executed in the right stores at the right time and at the right cost. The result is profitable sales and equity for our client's brands – and for Walmart.”

**Some examples of CROSSMARK's growth solutions:**

- Weekly coverage of all stores with a highly targeted, ROI oriented approach:
  - Daily blitzing of all stores during peak selling periods.
  - Multi-weekly coverage – call coverage up to 3x per week
- Turn around times as low as 24 hours
- Weekly video and multimedia training communicated to all reps
- Analytics that identify highest yield sales and brand building opportunities
- Minimizing the impact of brand and sku rationalization
- On-site staff

“It's critical that I have total confidence in our capabilities since I help develop business opportunities for existing and prospective clients” says Ken Drish, Vice President of Business Development for CROSSMARK's Walmart team. “Having been in the retail and marketing services business for close to 20 years, I have never had more confidence in the services I represent today with CROSSMARK. I've also never been more confident in the capacity of our company to adapt to the future's requirements as Walmart continues to evolve.”

CROSSMARK is Sales and Marketing Services Agency with offices in Australia, Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Headquartered in Plano, Texas, CROSSMARK operates in over U.S. 50 cities, including Rogers, Arkansas.

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Kris Widener, Ken Drish, Debbie Buckner, and Glen Walter lead the CROSSMARK Walmart team.